

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE GRE

The Graduate Record Examination, or GRE, tests verbal and quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and are not related to a specific field of study. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) that administers the GRE also offers GRE Subject Tests that may or may not be required by universities.

**Verbal Reasoning** measures the test taker's ability to

- analyze and draw conclusions from discourse; reason from incomplete data; identify author's assumptions and/or perspective; understand multiple levels of meaning, such as literal, figurative and author's intent
- select important points; distinguish major from minor or relevant points; summarize text; understand the structure of a text
- understand the meanings of words, sentences and entire texts; understand relationships among words and among concepts

**Quantitative Reasoning** measures the test taker's ability to

- understand, interpret and analyze quantitative information
- solve problems using mathematical models
- apply basic skills and elementary concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis

**Analytical Writing** measures the test taker's ability to

- articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively
- examine claims and accompanying evidence
- support ideas with relevant reasons and examples
- sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion
- control the elements of standard written English

### Who Takes It and Why?

Prospective graduate applicants take the General Test. GRE scores are used by admissions or fellowship panels to supplement undergraduate records and other qualifications for graduate study. The scores provide common measures for comparing the qualifications of applicants and aid in evaluating grades and recommendations.

### Where Do People Take It?

The General Test is offered year-round at computer-based test centers in the U.S., Canada, and many other countries. In addition, the General test at home is available around the clock, seven days a week.

### Who Accepts It?

Any accredited graduate, business or professional school, or any department or division within a school, may require or recommend that its applicants take the General Test, a Subject Test, or both. If approved by the GRE Board, a non-accredited institution can also receive test takers' scores.

### Computer-Based General Test Content and Structure

The computer-based General Test is composed of Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing sections. In addition, one unidentified, unscored section may be included, and this section can appear in any position in the test after the Analytical Writing

section. Questions in the unscored section are being tested for possible use in future tests, and answers will not count toward your scores.

Overall testing time is about three hours, forty-five minutes. There are six sessions with a ten-minute break following the third session. The directions at the beginning of each section specify the total number of questions in the section and the time allowed for the section.

The Analytical Writing section is always first and involves writing two essays. For the Issue prompt, two topics will be presented, and you will choose one. The Argument prompt does not present a choice of topics; instead, one topic will be presented. On its web site, ETS includes a pool of prompts from which the prompts on the test will be derived. However, the wording of some topics in the test might vary slightly from what is presented there. Therefore, read your test topic carefully and respond to the wording as it appears in the actual test.

The Verbal and Quantitative sections may appear in any order, including an unidentified unscored section. Treat each section presented during your test as if it counts. Answer all the questions, even those for which you don't know the answers, as this will improve your score.

### Typical Computer-Based Test

Section	Number of Questions	Time
Analytical Writing	1 "Analyze an Issue" Task*, 1 "Analyze an Argument" Task*	30 minutes per task
Verbal (2 sections)	20 per section	30 minutes
Quantitative (2 sections)	20 per section	35 minutes
Unscored**	Varies	Varies
Research***	Varies	Varies

\* For the Issue task, two essay topics are presented and you choose one. The Argument task does not present a choice of topics; instead one topic is presented.

\*\* An unidentified, unscored section may be included and may appear in any order after the Analytical Writing section. It is not counted as part of your score.

\*\*\* An identified research section that is not scored may be included, and it is always at the end of the test.

### Modified Versions of Verbal and Quantitative Questions

The test you take may include questions that are modified versions of published questions or of questions you have already seen on an earlier section of the test. Some modifications are substantial; others are less apparent.

Thus, even if a question appears to be similar to a question you have already seen, it may in fact be a different question and may also have a different correct answer. You can be assured of doing your best on the test you take by paying careful attention to the wording of each question as it appears in your test.

The GRE Program is currently investigating the feasibility of reusing questions that have been published in GRE practice materials. As part of that investigation, you may see questions from these materials on a test you take.